

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 02372

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, MT, US
SUBJECT: NATIONALIST PARTY LEADERS (NP) COMPLAIN ABOUT
- PRESIDENT'S LETTER; SEEK INVITATION TO
- WASHINGTON

1. DURING JULY 20 MEETING WITH NP LEADER DR. EDDIE FENECH ADAMI AND SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER DR. VINCENT TABONE, THEY COMPLAINED ABOUT THE MANNER IN WHICH PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF HAD USED PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER REGARDING OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD MINTOFF'S PROPOSED NEUTRALITY POLICY. FENECH ADAMI AND TABONE CONTENDED THAT MINTOFF IS MAKING IT APPEAR THAT PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ENDORSED MINTOFF'S POLICY OF EQUAL TREATMENT OF THE TWO SUPERPOWERS. WHEN WE SAID WE THOUGHT THAT MOST MALTESE WOULD UNDERSTAND THE PRESIDENT'S APPROVAL OF MALTESE NEUTRALITY TO REFER MORE TO MINTOFF'S WELL-KNOWN PROPOSAL FOR NEUTRALITY GUARANTEES FROM BOTH EUROPEAN AND ARAB STATES THAN TO HIS POLICY TOWARD THE US AND THE USSR, THEY RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS DEFINITELY NOT THE CASE. THEY STRESSED THAT THIS PUT THE NATIONALIST PARTY AND "ALL MALTESE" WHO ARE FRIENDS OF WESTERN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES IN A DIFFICULT POSITION. APART FROM GETTING NO SUPPORT FOR THEIR PRO-WEST POLICY, THE NP WAS DEEPLY CONCERNED AS THIS SITUATION HAS "RAISED DOUBTS" IN THE MINDS OF MALTESE ABOUT
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PAGE 02 VALLET 02372 271043Z

WHETHER AMERICA CARES ABOUT MALTA AT ALL.

2. TABONE LATER RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF FENECH ADAMI VISITING WASHINGTON TO "EXPLAIN THE POSITION OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY". TABONE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE NATIONALIST PARTY ENJOYS CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH THE EMBASSY BUT THOUGHT THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR FENECH

ADAMI TO MEET WITH SENIOR OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON. I RESPONDED NEGATIVELY AS GENTLY AS I COULD, POINTING OUT THAT IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR US TO INVITE FENECH ADAMI TO WASHINGTON WHEN THE PRIME MINISTER HAD NEVER BEEN INVITED. WHILE STRESSING THAT WE WOULD NOT TRY TO PREVENT A VISIT, I EXPLAINED THAT WE COULD NOT BE CERTAIN AS TO WHOM FENECH ADAMI WOULD SEE IN WASHINGTON SHOULD HE DECIDE TO GO THERE PRIVATELY. WE ALSO NOTED THAT ANOTHER NATIONALIST MP, MICHAEL FALZON, WOULD SHORTLY BE VISITING WASHINGTON UNDER THE IVP PROGRAM, THAT THE PARTY'S SECRETARY GENERAL HAD VISITED LAST YEAR, AND THAT IN ANY EVENT THE PARTY'S POSITION WAS WELL KNOWN TO US. FENECH ADAMI, WHO UP TO THIS POINT HAD ALLOWED TABONE TO DO ALL THE TALKING, RESPONDED WITH GOOD GRACE, INDICATING HIS UNDERSTANDING OF OUR POSITION. THEIR REQUEST WAS LEFT AT THAT. LAINGEN

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